**Public House Relief**

In the Spring Budget the Government announced a new relief scheme for public houses that have a rateable value of below £100,000. Under the scheme, eligible public houses will receive up to a £1000 discount on their bill. The relief will have effect for 2017/18.

The scheme will be available to eligible occupied properties with a rateable value of less than £100,000. The majority of public houses are independently owned or managed and will not be part of chains. Where public houses are part of a chain, relief will be available for each eligible property in the chain, subject to meeting State Aid requirements.

There is no definitive description of a traditional pub or public house in law which could be readily used by local authorities to determine eligibility. The objective has been to adopt an approach that makes the design and eligibility of the scheme easy to implement by local authorities in a clear and consistent way, is widely accepted by the industry and which is consistent with the Government’s policy intention.

The Government’s policy intention is that eligible pubs should:

* be open to the general public
* allow free entry other than when occasional entertainment is provided
* allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed
* permit drinks to be purchased at a bar.

For these purposes, it should exclude:

 restaurants

 cafes

 nightclubs

 hotels

 snack bars

 guesthouses

 boarding houses

 sporting venues

 music venues

 festival sites

 theatres

 museums

 exhibition halls

 cinemas

 concert halls

 casinos

The proposed exclusions in the list is not intended to be exhaustive and it will be for the local authority to determine those cases where eligibility is unclear.

State Aid law is the means by which the European Union regulates state funded support to businesses. Providing discretionary relief to ratepayers is likely to amount to State Aid. However the support for ratepayers will be State Aid compliant where it is provided in accordance with the *de minimis* regulations (EC 1407/2013)14.

The *de minimis* regulations allow an undertaking to receive up to €200,000 of ‘*de minimis*’ aid over a rolling three year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years).

**What happens next?**

The Revenues Service have identified public houses which may receive public house relief.

The Council has contacted public houses directly who may be eligible to receive the support outlined above and those qualifying for a relief will have the appropriate relief applied to their Business Rates account as soon as is practicable and where appropriate a new Business Rates bill will be issued. Payment should be made in accordance with the current Business Rates bill issued until advised otherwise.

Further information regarding the new scheme can be found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/42017-spring-budget-update>

[Public House Relief Application](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/TamesideMBC/media/Business-Rates/PublicHouseReliefApplication_1.pdf)